

Important Actions to Take if You Think You Have the Flu

Do not panic! Most cases of H1N1 influenza are mild and resolve on their own with time.

- Stay home and avoid contact with other people. Staying at home means that you should not leave your home except to seek medical care. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social and public gatherings.
- Contact your health care provider if you have any questions or if you or a family member is at high risk for flu complications. Patients enrolled to Luke AFB should call 623-856-2273.
- Seek emergency medical care if you develop emergency warning symptoms (members will not be charged for an Emergency Room visit or ambulance services if they are required).

Specific Actions for Active Duty

1. Contact your supervisor :
 - Members with mild flu-like symptoms (fever, fatigue, cough, etc.), that do not have emergency warning symptoms, and are not in a high-risk category can be authorized by their supervisor to stay at home for 24 hours.
 - If the member is in a high-risk category, call 623-856-2273 and an evaluation will be done by a registered nurse.
2. If the member is still sick after the first 24-hours , contact 623-856-2273 to request a telephone consultation with a registered nurse.
 - Members will be evaluated and advised to either be placed on quarters, report to the clinic or the closest emergency room.
 - Supervisors will need to monitor the member's status while home with the flu.
3. The 56th Medical Group is here to help you with all your flu-related concerns. If you have any questions, call the Medical Group at 623-856-2273

Emergency Warning Symptoms

Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Adults/Adolescents:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness upon standing
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

If you or a family member experiences these symptoms please report to an Emergency Room

High Risk Categories for Flu Complications

- Age < 5 or > 65 years old
- Pregnant
- Weakened immune system, Diabetes, or Asthma
- COPD, Heart Disease or other chronic conditions
- Younger than age 19 and on chronic aspirin therapy

For More Information

- www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/
- www.flu.gov
- www.mass.gov/flu



H1 N1 Influenza: What You and Your Family Need to Know

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Basic Information About the Flu

What is novel strain H1N1 influenza?

Flu is caused by a germ called the influenza virus. Each year, several different strains of influenza virus circulate around the world. The flu vaccine we use each year contains the three strains of the virus that are most common that year. Unexpectedly, at the end of the flu season this past spring, a new type (novel strain) of the virus, H1N1, began to circulate around the world. Because it is a new strain, the seasonal flu vaccine does not provide adequate protection against this virus.

Is H1N1 influenza any different than other strains of influenza virus?

In the US, about 40,000 people die each year from the flu. So far, this virus appears to be about as dangerous as other strains of the virus. But, it is too early to know exactly how dangerous this new strain is.

How will I know if I have been infected by H1N1 influenza?

Symptoms of this flu include a fever (temperature of 100° F or more) and a cough and/or a sore throat. Currently, if you have a fever and cough and/or sore throat, it is most likely due to this new virus. As the flu season begins this fall, we expect to see other strains of influenza begin to circulate again.

What other symptoms are associated with H1N1 influenza?

People with H1N1 influenza commonly report runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

How is it spread?

Flu viruses are commonly spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching something with flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose. The virus can survive and infect a person for up to 2-8 hours after being deposited on a surface.

What should I do right now?

Follow the same actions that you take to prevent any flu - healthy lifestyle practices and avoid the germs and viruses spread by people who are sick with the flu.

Prevention! Help Avoid Getting the Flu

Everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the flu.

- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for several days. Purchase a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items you might need to avoid trips out in public while you are sick and contagious. Be sure you have a thermometer and know how to use it.
- Practice good health habits - Eating a healthy diet, getting enough rest, and participation in regular exercise can help your body's immune system.
- Hand hygiene/cough etiquette - Cough/sneeze into your shoulder area instead of using a tissue. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues.
- Get vaccinated - More information on dates/times/locations to get the H1N1 vaccine will be provided as it becomes available.
- Stay informed - knowing the facts is important! Public Health recommendations may change as more information about this new virus is known.

What Should I Expect from the Clinic if I Get the Flu?

- The 56th Medical Group is always here to provide care when you are sick.
- Based upon symptoms:
 - Home care advice will be given over the phone
 - An appointment will be made at the clinic - all patients with flu-like symptoms who come to the facility are required to wear a mask
 - You will be told to seek care at the nearest Emergency Room

Home Care Advice for People with the Flu

To help you feel better:

- **DRINK LOTS OF FLUIDS** - Drink clear fluids such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages (for infants) to keep from getting dehydrated.
- **MEDICATIONS** - Take non-prescription medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®), and cough medicine to relieve symptoms of fever, pain, and cough. You do not need to take these medicines regularly if your symptoms improve.
- Do not give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or products that contain aspirin to children or teenagers 18 years old or younger.

To avoid spreading the flu:

- **STAY HOME** - Avoid going to school, work or public places until you are afebrile (fever-free) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines (usually 3-5 days).
- **WEAR A FACEMASK** - If you are sharing a common space with other household members or if you must go out, wear a facemask to help prevent spreading the virus to others.
- **HANDWASHING** - Have everyone in the household wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **REDUCE CONTAMINATION** - Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly.
- Linens should be washed using household laundry soap and tumbled dry on a hot setting.
- Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub immediately after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap. Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, bathroom surfaces, kitchen counters and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.